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Associated Press

Energy Industry on Alert for Attack

BY H. JOSEF HEBERT
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON -- A possible terrorist threat against natural gas pipelines has put the U.S. oil and gas industry on high alert. Attorney General John Ashcroft called it "an uncorroborated report of undetermined reliability" but said it was being taken seriously.

Energy industry sources said Monday that Osama bin Laden may have ordered retaliatory strikes against North American natural gas facilities in event of his capture or death.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the warning issued by the FBI last week was general and singled out no specific target -- but referred specifically to natural gas infrastructure such as pipelines.

Ashcroft, asked about the subject at a news conference, confirmed that the FBI became aware of such a threat 10 days to two weeks ago.

He called it "an uncorroborated report of undetermined reliability about natural gas."

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